

BURNS

WHO IS AT RISK

- Children ages 4 and under and children with disabilities are at the greatest risk of burn-related death and injury. These children are especially at risk from scald and contact burns.
- Male children are at higher risk of burn-related death and injury than female children.
- Children in homes without smoke alarms are at greater risk of fires and fire-related death and injury.
- Males, especially those ages 10 to 14, are at the highest risk of fireworks-related injuries. However, children ages 4 and under are at the highest risk for sparkler-related injuries.

BURN PREVENTION EFFECTIVENESS

- Smoke alarms are extremely effective at preventing fire-related death and injury. The chances of dying in a residential fire are cut in half when a smoke alarm is present. Smoke alarms and sprinkler systems combined could reduce fire-related deaths by 82 percent and injuries by 46 percent.
- More than 75 percent of all scald burn-related injuries among children ages 2 and under could be prevented through behavioral and environmental modifications. Hot tap water scalds can be prevented by lowering the setting on water heater thermostats to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or below and by installing anti-scald devices in water faucets and shower heads. One study found that 82 percent of respondents in homes with young children did not know the temperature of the setting on their hot water heaters.

BURN PROTECTION LAWS

- Many states and the District of Columbia have laws that require smoke alarms to be used in both new and existing dwellings. Some states have no comprehensive smoke alarm laws. Other states have a variety of laws covering specific situations, such as new dwellings or multi-occupancy dwellings only.
- In 1994, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission issued a mandatory safety standard requiring disposable and novelty cigarette lighters to be child-resistant. Since this standard has been in effect, the number of child-play lighter fires has declined 58 percent, and the number of deaths and injuries associated with these fires has declined 31 percent and 26 percent respectively.
- Many communities have enacted local ordinances or building codes that require the installation of anti-scald plumbing devices in all new construction. These laws have been effective in reducing the number of scald burn deaths and injuries associated with hot tap water.

HEALTH CARE COSTS AND SAVINGS

- The total annual cost of scald burn-related deaths and injuries among children ages 14 and under is approximately \$2.1 billion. Children ages 4 and under account for \$1.3 billion, or more than 60 percent, of these costs.
- Total charges for pediatric admissions to burn centers average \$22,700 per case.

PREVENTION TIPS

- Never leave a child alone, especially in the bathroom or kitchen. If you must leave the room, take the child with you.
- Install smoke alarms in your home on every level and in every sleeping area. Test them once a month, replace the batteries at least once a year (unless the batteries are designed for longer life) and replace the alarms every 10 years. Ten-year lithium alarms are also available and do not require an annual battery change.
- Set your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or below. Consider installing water faucets and shower heads containing anti-scald technology.
- Keep matches, gasoline, lighters and all other flammable materials locked away and out of children's reach. Never allow children to handle fireworks.
- Use back burners and turn pot handles to the back of the stove when cooking. Keep appliance cords out of children's reach, especially if the appliances contain hot foods or liquids. Cover unused electrical outlets with safety devices.
- Keep hot foods and liquids away from table and counter edges. Never carry or hold children and hot foods or liquids at the same time.

